November 14, 1988

Statement Concerning
Academic Qualifications of Barbara Harris

The Rev. Barbara Harris was one of the early participants in a new program in the Diocese of Pennsylvania called the Alternative Program for Theological Education and Training. This program has been listed and described in the Directory of Alternative Programs of dioceses for training for ordained ministry issued by Educators and Trainers for Ministry (an informal Church-wide organization of representatives of these programs). This program was based on a number of assertions growing out of the discipline of adult learning:

1. Theological education takes place in many different ways and in many different settings. It is not exclusively the activity of a theological seminary. It can be discerned by reflection upon experiences in the Church and as a Christian in the world.

2. Adults learn many different things in their work settings and in their reading and other various activities that make up adult life. It is possible through CLEP, the College Level Examination Program (a standard testing program administered as part of the counseling services of many colleges and universities), to ascertain whether or not a person has a college level knowledge and competence in a given subject area.

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3. Life experience is a valid area for examination in ascertaining the qualifications of a person and can be evaluated in a methodical and useful way.

Barbara Harris first met the requirements of Episcopal Church Canons, Title III, Sec. 7(b.) which were used in the Diocesan Program as the standard for undergraduate equivalents. She did this through satisfactorily completing the required tests in the CLEP program described above.

Then she presented a breakdown of her various experiences in the Church and outside, grouped according to what she learned from them under the seven subject areas delineated by the Canons of the Episcopal Church for Theological Education. This review included books that had been read, conferences and workshops and classes that had been attended and all the various activities in which she participated, in the Church, in her work experiences and in other areas of her life. These were reviewed and it was determined in which areas of the seven canonically identified subjects she needed further work. The courses and other activities which were listed in her resume, including a program at the Sheffield Theological Institute in England, were all ways in which her vast experience and activity in the Church were supplemented. Her program, including what she had done and what she proposed to do, was approved by the Academic Sub-Committee of

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the Commission on Ministry. Her progress in it was reviewed and accepted at the times stated in the Canons of the Episcopal Church by the Commission on Ministry and the Standing Committee.

The program and her activities in it were finally evaluated by the General Ordination Examination of the Church, which Barbara Harris passed. It should be noted that there have been several occasions in the experience of this diocese in which persons who completed the three year seminary training did not pass the General Ordination Examinations. No one who participated in the Alternative Program in the Diocese of Pennsylvania was unable to pass that examination satisfactorily.

- (The Very Rev.) John F. Hardwick
Standing Committee
Diocese of Pennsylvania